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THE TENDENCY OF STUDENTS TO OMIT THE COLLEGE COURSE THAT THEY MAY ENTER PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS DIRECT FROM THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

THIS subject is one that demands drastic treatment. The disease admits of a simple diagnosis. It is a contagious malady, answers to the germ theory, and while its infection knows no limits, it abounds especially in large cities, where men most do congregate, where the golden calf is worshiped, and conscience becomes but the negative exponent of a minus quantity. Its therapeutics, however, have defied the skill of all who have hitherto attempted to stay its ravages, which have been no respecter of persons. Its victims are found alike in the bedchamber of the sick, who languish and die through the treatment of unskilled attendants ; at the bar where is but the mockery of justice, and where men become entangled in the meshes of the law from which they extricate themselves only by the surrender of their property ; in the pew, which looks to the pulpit for the pure milk of the Word, and witnesses but the polluted liquefaction of some gaseous vapor. They ask for fish and receive serpents, for bread, and receive stones, and then people wonder why the Sunday newspaper is so popular, and religion is at so low an ebb ; and most sadly of all, perhaps, the victims of this fell and foul disease are found in astonishing numbers among the fifteen millions of children in our country who, for lack of instruction which is pedagogical, and instructors who are philosophical, either fall out by the way, discouraged with their ineffective treatment, *or are kept on a diluted diet two or three years longer than either nature or reason demands.*

Professional schools, within the scope of my theme, I classify as those of theology, law, medicine, and normal schools. Their membership should consist, first, of those who are by the

endowments of nature specifically fitted for the calling to which they propose to consecrate their lives, and, secondly, of those who have strengthened and supplemented the gifts of nature by the very highest general, and most extensive special education which the best institutions in the land now afford. These people are by law (what crimes are committed in the name of a diploma!), and ought to be by acquirements, the conservators of the public health and the public morals, the dispensers of digestible spiritual food and the trainers by psychic methods of all the youth of the nation; to them are committed trusts which bank vaults cannot measure, and for the failure to guard which nothing can atone.

The pulpit, where polish of manner, grace of utterance, culture of mind, piety of spirit should abound, and which in the absence of any one of these qualities so far falls short of its divine mission, is today of diminishing value as an agency in the world's evangelization. I do not mean to say that clergymen are less cultured and less educated than formerly, but that their education and culture have not kept pace with the spread of general intelligence, with the ability of the people to read and reason, and with their skill in piercing the vulnerable shields, and shattering the shallow arguments which come as messages from the Infinite. In every church, urban and rural, there sit enthroned in the pews more talent, logic, pathos, and power than emanate from the pulpit. You say there may be lack of profound education in the other professions but not in the ministry. Surely our churches, and the people who sustain them, and are spiritually sustained by them, demand an educated ministry. This cause, the right attitude of man toward his Creator, the preparation of the soul for immortality, must have for its advocates in this materialistic and semi-skeptical age, men whose minds as well as hearts have been enriched with the results of the closest study and the deepest research. I thought indeed that a careful examination of recent statistics covering our theological institutions, which are responsible for the character and caliber of those who are sent out to preach the gospel,

would show that at least 75 per cent. of the students were college educated, who had received a degree in letters or science from some institution, however humble, authorized to bestow the same. I was much too sanguine, and my blood chilled to find my calculations so far in error. In the last report of the United States Commissioner of Education, which brings the statistics down to as late as 1894, we find the following :

The circular sent out by the bureau asked, "How many students have degrees in letters or science?" One hundred and four of the 147 theological institutions answered this question. In these schools there were 4699 students, of whom 2185, or less than 47 per cent., had a degree. It is a noticeable fact that in the 43 of the 147 schools which did not answer this question there were 2957 students, or nearly one-third of the entire enrollment, in the 147 schools. It is also significant that of the 2185 who had degrees, 1971, or all but 214, were in the divinity schools of the North Atlantic and North Central states, and while there were 200 more students in the schools of the North Central states, there were 500 less having degrees. This clearly shows that in the states of Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania there is a much larger ratio of college graduates among candidates for the ministry than in any other section of the country. A careful study of all these statistics, noting the denomination, distribution, and general standing of these schools, compels the conviction that among those who expect to win their way to heaven and upon earth by such an exposition of the Scriptures and such powers of persuasion as will regenerate the people and bring them into harmony with the divine, less than 40 per cent. have the antecedent preparation of an ordinary college education.

The story of the colored brother is not out of place. He appeared before the conference of ministers for the laying on of hands, and, in answer to the demand that he should present some proof of his divine call, said that night after night near the full of the moon there had appeared to him spanning the sky in a blaze of light these cabalistic letters, G. P. C.—*Go*

preach Christ. At this juncture a brother in the congregation, wise in his generation, interrupted the proceedings by crying out: "You are mistaken, those letters mean *Go plough corn.*" You can make the application. If the misfits in theology, law, medicine, and the teaching profession were to *go plough corn*, the desert might blossom as the rose, and there would certainly be fewer deaths, less suicides, more contentment, a broader culture, and a deeper sense of piety in the world.

If we turn from the schools of theology to those of law, we find a still more deplorable condition of statistics. Every learned profession calls for the rarest gifts and the ripest training. Students of law or practitioners at the bar cannot be too thoroughly equipped. The sharpest mental acumen, the greatest accumulation of knowledge, the deepest insight into the subtleties of human nature, the closest powers of analysis, the most astute judgment, the choicest vocabulary, the mastery of expression, are all needed by him who would convince judges, sway juries, ravel the mysteries and enforce the righteousness of his cause. An attorney-at-law, in the highest sense of the word, should be an artist and a scientist, an orator and a logician, a philosopher and a psychologist. What are the facts? In the *sixty-seven* law schools of the country representing thirty-one states, there were in attendance in 1894 7311 students, of whom *less than 20 per cent.* had received any degree in letters or science. Eighty per cent., or four-fifths of those who expect to be the conservators of justice in this country, are studying law with no previous equipment but that of a common-school or possibly a high-school education. Of the 7311 students for 1893-4, 34 per cent. graduated. This large per cent. is the result of the shortness of the course. Of the sixty-seven law schools, thirteen only have a three years' course, forty-seven a two years' course, and seven a course of but one year, and when we remember that a year consists of but six to nine months, what a travesty upon education do these schools become! In attending a law commencement in our city a year ago, one of our prominent judges sitting near me remarked as the proces-

sion of immature youths in cap and gown passed by: "Of the 4000 lawyers in Chicago the bulk of the work is done by 400, and of these 400, 300 had probably received a college education previous to the study of the law."

Few restrictions are placed upon the practice of law. The constitution of Indiana expressly states that any man may practice law who is a voter and of good moral character, and the stress laid upon the latter qualification has as yet never been discernible.

I sent the following circular recently to 150 professional schools:

MY DEAR SIR:—Will you extend to me the courtesy of sending me as full information as is consistent with your duties, concerning the following points:

(1) What are the *minimum* requirements for admission to your institution? (State whether common-school, high-school, or college diploma, or equivalent education of any one of these, or by examination covering what subjects and to what extent.)

(2) Have you maximum requirements? If so, what?

(3) Do students entering with high-school diploma and those with college diploma enter same classes, under same conditions for same work?

(4) How many years in your course of how many months each?

(5) To what extent is your course the lecture system, and to what extent the text-book and laboratory system?

(6) What per cent. of your students are college graduates? What per cent. high-school graduates only? What per cent. common-school graduates only? What per cent. of instructors are college graduates?

(7) What is your opinion concerning the education which ought to be secured before entering your institution in preparation for a professional career?

Yours truly,

A. F. Nightingale,

Superintendent of High Schools.

Replies, in many instances of exceeding great interest, have been received from most of these institutions, but too late to be thoroughly classified for this paper.

The Dean of the College of Law of the University of Pennsylvania says:

"My opinion is that the student should have a college education. If he has no special leaning toward the sciences or languages, I think he should take the courses in college which deal with history and political science. He should know at least one language thoroughly. It is better that this language should be Latin; if not, German. Except under peculiar circumstances I think it is unwise for a young man to undertake the study of law at the present time, if he expects to make his living at the bar, without the preparation which comes from a college training."

And yet in this very institution 43 per cent. of the students today have a common-school education only.

Permit me to quote from other jurists of high standing on this subject: "Hundreds of young men are being admitted to the bar in the various states, many of whom can never become properly qualified on account of lack of elementary education." Again, "This condition of affairs [viz., the clogging of the courts with a mass of cases] exists either because the practitioners of law are inefficient, because they are of such base caliber that they willingly degrade the profession by a wilful obstruction or perversion of justice, or because of a combination of these causes." "Litigation is now properly considered an evil. The people are losing faith in the ability of their courts to arbitrate the difference of litigants accurately, speedily, and inexpensively." "Law students can obtain admission to the practice of their profession in a shorter time than can students in any other calling. Not only is a longer course of study required in other classes than in law schools, but the percentage of students graduating is less than in law schools. Moreover, while the course in law schools is shorter than in any of the others, a large number of law students do not take even that, but depend entirely upon private study and information acquired in a lawyer's office." "So long as students can secure admission to the bar through the inferior courts, after only a few months of study, and with little regard to the legal knowledge obtained, it will be impossible for law schools to require full courses of study."

Our law schools are greatly at variance in regard to methods used. In thirty-three the instruction is mainly by lectures; in twenty-four mainly by recitations from text-books; in three the main reliance is placed upon the discussion and explanation of leading cases. In the remainder there is a union of the two or three methods, a kind of eclectic system.

The most deplorable fact of all is that the students, whether graduates of a common school, a high school, or equipped with a college education and a degree, receive their instruction in the same classes, recite from the same texts, and are subject to the same quizzes. As well may we attempt to teach geometry or physics or Greek to pupils of the fourth grade and the eighth grade and the tenth grade at the same time, in the same classes, and in the same way, looking for the same results. The whole plan of preparing men to defend righteousness and secure justice borders on the farcical, and becomes a fit subject of ridicule for transatlantic scholars.

When we turn from the law to medicine we simply pass from the thicket into the jungle. Among the 22,000 students in the 152 medical schools of the country in 1893-4 it was impossible for the Commissioner of Education from the confusing data received to make any satisfactory estimate of the number of college-educated men. It is quite safe to say, however, that not more than 10 per cent. had received degrees. This is appalling when we consider the value of human life and the consequent necessity of the deepest scientific knowledge to counteract the effect of disease upon the system.

Nearly 8000 new doctors graduate every year from our medical schools, and the ratio of these students to our population is twice what it is in European countries. No wonder the *Pacific Medical Journal* says: "It is becoming constantly harder for a young medical man to get a foothold. What he lacks in college training he makes up by long waiting after he gets his degree."

Notwithstanding the standard for entrance and graduation has been vastly raised by the medical schools the last ten years,

and they deserve great credit for this advance, nevertheless the numbers in actual attendance have not been diminished. It is said that the common schools and the high schools are educating large numbers of young men who have aspirations for the higher callings, but how much nobler would be those aspirations, were these young men to realize that the profession was crowded, and that real success lay along the path of a broader education as a basis for medical study.

Our medical schools are now filled with students who flock to them from the factory and the farm, and the few of college training, whose mental grasp is quick and keen, must sit side by side with those who often have less than a common-school education and listen to the same lectures, attend the same clinics, and answer the same quizzes. These conditions cannot long continue. Changes for the better are going on, but they are all too slow. Radical measures should be taken to relieve all our professional schools from the seemingly low motives which now call them into existence and sustain them, and which degrade the very name of professional, and place them where they belong, the supplements of a college education, so that those who follow the career of theology, law, or medicine may truthfully be said to belong to the learned professions.

The limit of this paper will not permit a discussion of the normal-school question; a question which, in its relations to the sum-total of human contentment and human success, looks all others out of countenance. It is the greatest educational question of the age. A preacher may be pious but illy fitted for the pulpit,—a lawyer may be both unlearned and unscrupulous,—a doctor may be unskilled and unscientific, but these men deal largely with adults who can think and reason for themselves, and make their own selection of doctors, spiritual, legal, medical.

The fifteen or twenty million of children in this country, however, are as clay in the hands of the potter to the school-teacher, who is so large a factor in their mental and moral training. Here, neither the children nor their parents have any

choice, and the child becomes the pliant tool of the teacher to be dulled or sharpened according to her wit and wisdom or her frivolity and folly.

Whence come these teachers who are to be responsible for the citizenship of the next generation? In the grammar and primary schools, among the rank and file, not 1 per cent. have a degree in letters or science. Vast numbers are without even a high-school training, and those who are graduates of a high school, and have a year of normal instruction, are scarcely more than twenty years of age, and while they may pay tithe of "mint and anise and cummin" they are not fitted to be the molders of mind, a work which, in its highest excellence, can be done by those only who are both skilled by nature—God-endowed—and by the academic training of the best institutions of learning.

What are the facts? Even though the normal schools, public and private, as at present conducted, *are* the schools par excellence for the preparation of teachers, how few they supply. There were 14 million children in the common schools of the country in 1894, and they were taught or taken care of by 388,000 teachers. It is fair to suppose that 20 per cent. of these teachers, or 77,600, are new each year.

In the 160 public normal schools in 1894 there were 37,899 students, of whom 5952, or 16 per cent., graduated. At the 238 private normal schools which have no public supervision and are conducted largely as commercial institutions, a pure business enterprise, there were 27,995 attendants, of whom 2291, or 8 per cent., graduated, and it may be of interest to note, by way of advertisement, that of these 2291 graduates from 238 private schools, 578, or more than 25 per cent., were from a single school. Therefore, in 1894, 8243 graduated from the 398 normal schools of the country. There were, in addition to the 66,000 students in the normal schools *per se*, in 1894, 55,000 in the pedagogical courses of 173 colleges, 5000 in the so-called training course of 153 public high schools, and 4300 in a similar course of 137 private high schools. From all the

schools representing 861 distinct institutions, which profess to have a normal department or teachers' training course, there were no more than 10,000 graduates in 1894, or less than 13 per cent. of the actual number required each year to replenish the ranks and supply the natural increase of teachers.

Making due allowance for the fact that figures will lie, we nevertheless are forced to the conclusion that a very large per cent. of those who are engaged for the first time each year to teach our children in their earliest development at school have neither a college education, normal instruction, nor a high-school diploma.

As we hasten to a conclusion let us pause to inquire what are the causes of this unhappy condition of scholastic affairs regarding professional training.

We attribute these causes, first, to that spirit of haste, which makes waste, on the part of our young people whose semi-education, always a dangerous possession, allures them into the path of professional study.

They know too much to be day-laborers or clerks behind the counter. The hill of success in business vocations is too steep for them to climb. Entrance to a professional school is so easy, the course so short and pleasant, and a diploma and a degree so cheap, that they join the class of those who rush in where angels fear to tread.

Secondly, because the professional schools themselves seem to be established purely as a business enterprise, not from educational motives, not for the purpose of turning out learned men, men of genius and power, but rather that the managers may glorify themselves, and make to themselves a name and a fame among men, not to speak of the fee which each student contributes. These schools, especially of law and medicine and dentistry and pharmacy, vie with each other as to the number of diplomas they can sell.

They throw wide open their doors, and tempt callow youth, immature and unrefined, to leave the hammer on the anvil and the plough in the furrow, to become pettifogging lawyers and self-

conceited doctors. Surely so many schools and so many students are not needed. This country is suffering today from a surfeit of poor preachers, poor lawyers, poor doctors and poor teachers. If it should become a rule tomorrow that no student could hereafter enter a law school without the equipment of a college education, we should have fewer attorneys, but less litigation and more peace and good will among men.

If the same were true of schools of theology, there would be a diminution of starving preachers, but much less skepticism and more piety in the world.

If candidates for a medical degree were compelled to first obtain an academic degree, there would be less doctors and fewer funerals.

George Howland once said to the writer, "It is surprising what progress pupils will make in spite of the teacher, and it is equally astonishing how many people recover from disease in spite of the doctors."

As was said by a recent distinguished candidate for the presidency, what we need is agitation.

It is the duty of this great University to take an exalted position in this question. It is the duty of every college, of all educators and all citizens who do not believe in the principles of mere empiricism and charlatanism, to sound the note that shall cry a halt to the unprofessional conduct of our professional schools.

A. F. NIGHTINGALE

CHICAGO